

Katharine Morris

New Haven, Connecticut

**S.B. 4 An Act Concerning the Clean Air Act
&
H.B. 5039 An Act Concerning Medium and Heavy-Duty Vehicle Emission Standards**

March 11th, 2022,

Dear esteemed members of the Environment & Transportation Committees:

As a scholar-activist for environmental justice, current resident of New Haven, and former resident of Hartford and Bridgeport, I, Katharine Morris, am **writing to express my joint support of S.B. 4 An Act Concerning the Clean Air Act and H.B. 5039: An Act Concerning Medium and Heavy-Duty Vehicle Emission Standards**, with amendments, in order to reduce vehicular emissions as one function of addressing climate change, environmental justice, and health equity.

According to the CT DEEP, the transportation sector is the largest source of statewide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions at 37% and increasing when they must decline by at least one-third if Connecticut is to meet its GHG emissions reduction target for 2030. Medium and heavy-duty (MHD) vehicles—which include trucks, buses, and smaller delivery vehicles—are responsible for 25% of vehicular greenhouse gas emissions and for 67% of smog producing nitrogen oxides (NOx) emissions.

Moreover, vehicular emissions from: tailpipes, contact between vehicle, and the road surface, and the use of brakes, are an important source of particulate matter (PM) namely PM2.5, PM0.1, and PM0.05, which can be deposited deep into the respiratory tract and lead to various adverse health effects, including respiratory, nervous system, autoimmune disorders, and mortality that plague environmental justice communities. In CT, Black and Latinx teens/children have disproportionately high rates of asthma related emergency room visits; and there are approximately 168 deaths/year due to air pollution with the highest death rates in New Haven County, Fairfield County, and Hartford County (Hladky, 2016).

A study conducted in our neighboring state, Harlem, New York, revealed that local diesel truck traffic may influence PM2.5 concentrations. In South Bronx, New York, the mean outdoor school-site PM2.5 concentrations were 14.3 µg/m³, which were associated with vehicle traffic around the school on weekdays and proximity to roadways. This has severe ramifications on children's health, particularly neurodevelopment with their developing brain and immune systems. Additionally, studies found that PM2.5 exposure will increase the risk of children's behavioral problems, both in the short and long-term. Through the included initiatives, S.B. 4 and H.B. 5039, simultaneously addresses public health and climate change by effectively reducing exposure to toxic vehicular emission and thus greenhouse gas emissions. That said, I would recommend amendments that strengthen the bills including but not limited to: reducing emissions by 65% (not 45) from 2015 (not 2001) by 2030, also expanding electric public transit buses (especially in EJ communities), and lastly, placing a gas/carbon tax on fossil fuel producers not consumers to ensure greater equity in a just transition to green energy and transit.

Sincerely,
Katharine Morris, MPP